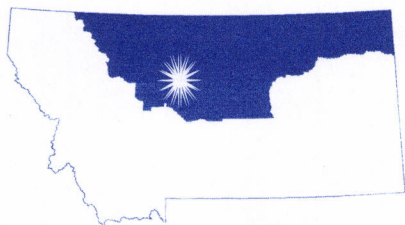


North Central Independent Living Services, Inc.



January 28, 2015

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Black Eagle, MT 59414

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Toll Free 800-823-6245

SENATE 406-453-3940

Exhibit No.

Date

Bill No.

2
1-28-2015
SB 180

Chair Tutvedt and Members of the Montana Senate Taxation Committee:

My name is Shyla Patera. I am writing this testimony as a citizen advocate for transit, chair of my local transportation advisory council and an independent living specialist and chair of the Montana Independent Living Task transportation Force. I ask for committee support of Senate Bill 180. As a citizen, I use my fixed route and paratransit system each day. Having the opportunities of successful employment, volunteerism, and community participation may and probably would not be possible for me due to severe myopia or eyesight and other disabilities without public transit. As a community advocate, Chair of the Great Falls Transportation Advisory Council and an independent living specialist, I advocate to keep public transit strong throughout Montana. As a co chair of the Montana Independent Living transportation task force, I and other Montanans with disabilities educate our communities not only about gaps such as community and transit accessibility but also successes in our public transit systems and communities. Montana has 40 transit providers with 37 rural small town providers and 3 small urban providers who often serve Montanans with disabilities and seniors. Montana has created a senior and disabled account called Transade. This account and the creating it provide that a portion of your licensee registration fee be dedicated to support senior and disabled transportation. Because Montana has changed our licensing and fee structure revenue in the account has decreased, this leaves one less funding option available to providers. As a transit advocate, I am encouraged that Senator Hoven is sponsoring Senate bill 180 and a healthy discussion about public transit can occur. As a transit rider, I can tell you Montanans who ride want equal access. Transportation is non partisan and all of us should do our part to keep transit strong throughout Montana.

Shyla C. Patera

Shyla Patera

IL Specialist

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